Launching of INSAT-3B

889. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be oleased to state:

(a) whether ISRO's INSAT-3B satellite is ready for launching, as reported in The Hindustan Times dated the 25th January, 2000;

(b) whether it would be used to provide the -first set of transponders for the "Vidya Vahini Programme" announced by the Prime Minister on 15th August, 1999.

(c) whether any cost benefit study made on INSAT-3B, if so, with what results; and

(d) what is present demand and supply position of transponders in the country indicating target set upto 2002 by ISRO?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SPACE (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The total number of operational transponders in the INSAT system is 71 (56 C-band, 7 Ext-C, 3 Ku-band and 5 S-bands including MSS). With the launch of INSAT- 3B satellite in March, 2000, the total number of transponders in the INSAT system will increase to 87 Nos., which is expected to meet the current demand. By the year 2002, the country's demand for transponders is estimated to be in the vicinity of 135 transponders.